

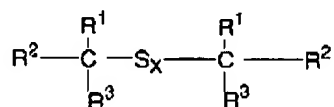
Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please note that no changes have been made to the amendments by this paper.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a masticated rubber comprising masticating a rubber in the presence of a dialkyl polysulfide wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is a polysulfide of the formula



wherein

R¹ to R³ are identical or different and represent a linear or branched C₁-C₁₈-alkyl radical or represent hydrogen and

x represents the numbers 3 to 5,

and optionally admixing rubber chemicals and/or fillers into the masticated rubber, wherein the process is carried out in the absence of vulcanizing agents.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 4, wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is used in amounts of 0.1 to 10 phr, based on the total amount of said rubbers to be masticated.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 4, wherein said rubber is selected from the group consisting of natural rubber (NR), styrene/butadiene copolymers (SBR), acrylonitrile/ butadiene copolymers (NBR), ethylene/propylene copolymers (EPDM) and fluorohydrocarbon rubbers.

Claim 7. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 6, wherein said rubbers are selected from the group consisting of natural rubber and styrene/butadiene copolymers.

Claim 8. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 4, wherein said dialkyl polysulfide is used in conjunction with metal-containing heterocyclic ring compounds.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 4, wherein prior to mixing with said rubbers, said dialkyl polysulfides are absorbed onto a solid inert carrier.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 9, wherein said solid inert carrier is selected from the group consisting of carbon blacks, dispersed silicas and silicates, metal oxides, metal carbonates, metal sulfates, metal hydroxides, and organic carrier materials.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) A process according to Claim 10, wherein said solid inert carrier is selected from the group consisting of silica and carbon black.